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**The Washington Merry-Go-Round****Rep. Clark Collects Fees for Passports****By Jack Anderson**

The law expressively forbids members of Congress from accepting fees for doing government favors. Yet Rep. Frank Clark (D-Pa.) has been charging his constituents a \$2 service fee for expediting their passport applications.

The congressman explained to us that the charge covers "taxi fare to and from the Passport Office." However, he usually delivers several applications at a time.

The Passport Office provides special blue-ribbon service for members of Congress. Four telephone lines are kept open for congressional requests, and an eight-man crew does nothing but expedite applications from Capitol Hill.

Clark has taken advantage of this fast, free congressional service to make a few bucks on the side. He has spread the word to courthouses in his district to direct passport applicants to his office.

"I give them fast service," the congressman said. "I have one of my girls take their passport applications to town. I charge \$2 taxi fare to and from the passport office. It's a special service I've had, and it's paid off politically for me. I handle as many as 10 a week.

"They get their applications at the court house and have them made out. A lot come in without any money at all. We just wait until one comes in

with money before we take them over to the Passport Office.

"I think it's a good service, and I'm going to continue having them pay for the taxi fare."

This isn't the first time Clark has been in trouble for allegedly collecting private fees for performing public services. In the early 1960s, the FBI investigated allegations that he had taken money to handle immigration cases and academy appointments. No charges, however, were brought against him.

Congressmen are expected, in return for their government pay, to serve their constituents. The \$42,500 annual salary they draw from the taxpayers is all the compensation that they're allowed to collect under the law.

Footnote: The bouncy Bessemer, Pa., Democrat should be an authority on passports, for he is one of the most traveled members of Congress. He flies about the world constantly, inspecting bases, attending international conferences and taking in the sights.

**Saigon Merchants**

Saigon, like Washington, is having difficulty managing the economy. Chinese merchants, for example, are reported to be rigging the prices of chickens and pigs in a move to corner the meat market.

The White House has been

given an insight into these economic manipulations by the Central Intelligence Agency, which has submitted a secret, eight-page report on a recent Saigon cabinet meeting.

According to the CIA account of the secret proceedings, "Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem commented that the price of animal feeds is higher, while the price of meat has remained nearly the same.

"Therefore, despite the rise in feeds, the farmer cannot obtain higher prices for his animals, especially chickens and pigs, and middlemen have actually lowered the prices they will offer for live animals.

"Farmers are thus selling their chickens and pigs because, with the higher feed prices, there is no profit in raising these animals...

"Minister of Justice Le Van Thu said the lowering of prices paid to farmers for their chickens and pigs was nothing more than a trick by Chinese middlemen who want to pressure the retailers. As a result, in six months, Thu said, South Vietnam may have to import frozen meat.

"He suggested that the Chinese merchants might be conniving with foreigners in this 'plot,' and predicted that the price for chicken and pork will continue to rise as these animals become more scarce.

"Minister of State for Land

Clearance and Hamlet Establishment Phan Quang Dan said the crisis was created by Chinese middlemen who are trying to corner this particular market."

Sen. Frank Moss (D-Utah) is asking the good guys among America's top 200 businesses to stand up and be counted. Moss, as chairman of a Senate consumer subcommittee, is privately polling presidents of the companies on how they have met consumer demands.

The Utah Senator is hopeful the presidents' answers will suggest voluntary ways that industry abuses can be controlled and, thereby, stop proliferating bureaucratic measures. If the answers of the 200 are explicit enough, he will edit them and publish a committee study for use by business and consumer groups throughout the country.

Independent-minded Sen. James Buckley (Cons. R-N.Y.) avoided the usual tea and crumpets tour of presidents and foreign ministers when he visited eight Asian countries on a fact-finding study.

Instead of letting resident U.S. envoys accompany him to the sessions, Buckley went in to see the foreign dignitaries by himself, to the annoyance of U.S. ambassadors on the scene who had hoped to monitor the talks.

Bell-McClure Syndicate

# Beyond the Pentagon Papers

"The Vietnam experience shows the deliberateness with which Presidents, advisers, and bureaucracies . . . excluded disengagement as a feasible alternative."

HOW COULD IT HAPPEN IN Vietnam that a "small" commitment in the mid-1950s became a massive one in the mid-1960s? Several former administration "insiders" have recently stepped forward, encouraged by Daniel Ellsberg's release of the Pentagon Papers to provide answers. Beginning in the Eisenhower years, we are told by George Ball, a series of "small steps" were taken "almost absentmindedly" until the United States found itself "absorbed" into Vietnam. It was "the politics of inadvetence," Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., has written.

Ball. Yet the basic policies and concepts were right, says Roger Hilsman; the American failure was a failure of implementation, a case of inept execution. Quite the contrary, Leslie H. Gelb has argued in a recent *New York Review of Books* article: the decision-making system worked as its participants intended it to work, on the basis of a misguided consensus about the international and domestic political dangers of failing in Vietnam. Ellsberg, while supporting much of Gelb's analysis, has added his own dimension to the discussion, arguing that Presidential concern about future elections and the threat of a right-wing reaction to withdrawal short of victory was the first "rule" of policymaking on Vietnam.

The Pentagon Papers tell me that all of these explanations are misleading or inadequate. Choices to escalate rather than de-escalate or disengage were made deliberately, not haphazardly; policies were not merely implemented poorly, they were ill-conceived; concern over elections explains why changes in policy may have been postponed rather than why they resulted in continued or increased involvement. If the "system" as a whole worked so perversely well, it was because there was (and is) in American decision-makers and decisionmaking a disposition to respond to failure in ways that will perpetuate the "success" of America's mission abroad. The decisions that were taken on Vietnam—always to press ahead with the war, usually to expand it—reflected much more than calculations about the domestic and international repercussions. They were manifestations of deeper drives to preserve and expand personal, institutional and national power.

The most fateful decisions on Vietnam—those that enmeshed the United States ever more deeply and dramatically enlarged the perceived "stakes" in the outcome of the war—occurred during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations. What motivated these two Presidents and their common cast of senior policy advisers to make these decisions?

In the first place, they shared a number of bedrock assumptions about American responsibility for maintain-

challenge of communist-supported revolutions: thus the critical nature of the Vietnam experience for the United States and the "Free World," and the psycho-political importance of being firm in the face of the adversary's "provocations." One need not search between the lines for these assumptions; they emerge clearly from numerous documents and statements. The same John F. Kennedy who in June 1956 had spoken of Vietnam as "the cornerstone of the Free World in Southeast Asia, the keystone to the arch, the finger in the dike" also said as President seven years later: "We are not going to withdraw. In my opinion, for us to withdraw from that effort would mean a collapse not only of South Vietnam but Southeast Asia. So we are going to stay there." Those who theorize that Kennedy was on the verge of disengagement before his assassination and cite televised remarks of September 2, 1963—"In the final analysis it is their war" and "they have to win it"—ignore the essential point: Kennedy, as he demonstrated in throwing support to the anti-Diem generals, wanted this war won whatever the deficiencies of, and obstacles posed by, Saigon politics. "Strongly in our mind," he said in a less-quoted response on NBC television (September 9), "is what happened in the case of China at the end of World War II, where China was lost, a weak government became increasingly unable to control events. We don't want that." Kennedy would not "lose" South Vietnam, a determination that every South Vietnamese government then and since has learned how to exploit for accumulating aid without implementing reforms.

Well before the Tonkin Gulf incidents, it was recognized that increasing American involvement was contributing to the perceived value of South Vietnam, both for foreign and domestic policy. But this only lent greater validity to the "test case" hypothesis, according to McNamara (in a trip report to Johnson, March 16, 1964). The entire world, he wrote, regards the 'South Vietnam conflict . . . as a test case of US capacity to help a nation meet a communist 'war of liberation.'"